United Nations A/54/912–S/2000/561

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Items 116 (a) and (d)
Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments; comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 9 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a statement issued today, 9 June, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on the continuing human rights violations committed by the Tigray People's Liberation Front regime in Addis Ababa. The silence of the international community has given the Ethiopian Government a free hand to inflict suffering on the civilian population of my country. Although Ethiopian crimes against the Eritrean people are evident and have been witnessed by independent bodies, the international community has hitherto taken no action to stop these crimes. My Government reiterates its appeal to the international community to say "enough is enough" and come to the assistance of the suffering population.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 116 (a) and (d), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile **Menkerios**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-47467 (E) 150600

Annex to the letter dated 9 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on the crimes against humanity being committed by the inhumane Government in Ethiopia

After 30 years of struggle and hardship, the acts of violence and savagery being committed against the people of Eritrea have not ceased. From the onset of this brutal war, the oppressive and inhumane Government in Ethiopia has taken on the extreme mission to not only destroy the State of Eritrea but also to inflict the most incomprehensible suffering on its people possible. It has shown without any remorse or moral discernment that its desire is to reign as the bearer of anguish and despair against fellow members of humanity.

Without consideration for its own people, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) Government in Ethiopia continues to wage a war that has gained nothing but the unnecessary bloodshed and suffering of its own people. Despite its heavy and unacceptable cost, the Government chooses to send waves of its soldiers into conditions of war that are treacherous and surely to result in massacres. The loss of human lives has become an exploitable tactic of the war-hungry regime in Ethiopia that it does not shy away from using or admitting.

A chronicle of human rights abuses perpetrated by the Government of Ethiopia

1. The very first actions carried out by the Government of Ethiopia once it declared war against Eritrea were to inflict as much suffering and disrupt as many lives as possible, not only on the people of Eritrea but also on the people of Ethiopia. More than 70,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin living throughout Ethiopia have been sequestered, stripped of their belongings and left destitute near the border to venture across mine-filled battle zones to fend for themselves. These 70,000 people have been subjected to the most extreme forms of human rights violations. Their lives have been maliciously struck with as much inhumane treatment as possible, characterized by the forced separation of families, the forced abandonment of children, who will be left unattended and helpless, and the confiscation of approximately $800 million worth of property.

2. Whole Eritrean villages from lower Adiabo in Tigray have been deported from the area. The ruling officials of the region of Tigray, the home of TPLF, have ruthlessly set on fire the cultivated fields and crops that were to be harvested in recent months. Since this expulsion, these Eritreans have had to relocate to temporary sites in lowland Seraye in Eritrea, where they have been living in makeshift tents and under plastic sheets. With the recent invasion of this land by the Ethiopian army, these refugee camps were torn apart by ground and aerial bombardment, forcing the people into dislocation once again. Today there is no Eritrean living in Tigray; this entire province has been ethnically cleansed of Eritreans — an example of Ethiopia's persistent policy of torment and terrorization.

3. Around 1,500 youths claimed as "prisoners of war" have been incarcerated in Ethiopia. These young men have become prisoners of this war without ever engaging in belligerent or combative actions against Ethiopia. On this matter, in

spite of appeals made to many European countries, the United States of America and Canada by the human rights organization, Citizens for Peace in Eritrea, there has been no response by the international community for the release and protection of these innocent victims. The Government of Ethiopia has for the past two years indiscriminately jailed many of these Eritrean youths without any viable cause or evidence except for the fact that they are Eritrean and of military age. In addition to this, there still remain another 2,500 Eritreans missing in Ethiopia, whose whereabouts are unaccounted for.

4. Out of the estimated 130,000 Eritreans who were once living in Ethiopia, roughly only 30,000 remain. They are constantly subjected to harsh forms of discrimination and deprivation, including the denial of their children's right to attend public schools; they have been thrown out of public jobs without any compensation or explanation; and their private business licences have been revoked, impeding their sources of income needed for survival. These people of Eritrea live under a constant threat of violence, and yet for those who have registered with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to be repatriated to Eritrea, they have been refused permission to leave by the Government of Ethiopia.

5. By advocating for hate and bloodshed, Ethiopia's campaign of destruction for more than two years has succeeded in inculcating a culture of violence. This is best manifested in the carnage that the invading Ethiopian army wreaks as it enters and subsequently flees from occupied areas of Eritrea. In the two weeks that the Ethiopian army occupied the town of Barentu, modern hotels, public and private buildings and the bridge connecting the town to neighbouring areas were completely demolished and looted.

6. The recent violence committed against villagers in Molqu, Shambuco and other areas in the western lowlands was particularly vicious and was carried out to deliver deadly harm. By taking away the livestock of the Eritreans and looting their grain, the Ethiopian army deprived these people of their means to live, in turn leaving them for dead.

These accounts represent the massive violations of human rights that are being executed by the Government in Ethiopia. Under the circumstances, Ethiopia's allegations of human rights abuses are not only groundless, but also Ethiopia has no moral authority to accuse Eritrea of any such violations. These actions only further certify another attempt by this unjust Government to divert condemnation of the atrocities that it is committing against humanity — against the peoples of both Eritrea and Ethiopia.

As tensions rise because of the malicious actions being executed by the Ethiopian Government and its army against the people of Eritrea, it is only natural that the patience and tolerance of the Eritrean people at large is being tried. In the interest of their personal security as well as of those who have become internally displaced along with the 1.5 million Eritreans as a result of the war, the Government of Eritrea has sought out the assistance of ICRC in carrying out the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopians.

From 1998 to 1999, in the midst of the war, ICRC completed a round of repatriations of Ethiopian nationals. The State of Eritrea's recent actions fall into line with its previous concerns, with even more reason: the dangers faced today have become increasingly compelling. As such, any measures taken by the Government

of Eritrea concerning the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopian nationals are legally permissible and are not in contravention of international laws. In fact, they are carried out in accordance with a law passed by the Eritrean Parliament in June 1998, which binds the Government to prevent any forms of violence or aggression from being committed against Ethiopians living in Eritrea.

Despite its acceptance of international laws and conventions against the violation of human rights, the Government of Ethiopia proceeds with insolence and zeal to see the suffering of peoples regardless of its commitment to humanity and its accountability to the international community. Such actions constitute a blatant act of contempt and irreverence for the laws that govern our free world, the same laws that are meant to ensure the protection and respect of the sanctity of human rights in the face of war and political, economic or military ambition.

It is a fallacy and an injustice to the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia, as well as to the international community, for the Government of Ethiopia to claim that it speaks and acts on behalf of the interests of its people. This corrupt and oppressive Government must be held accountable and brought to terms with the crimes against humanity that it continues to commit.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Asmara
9 June 2000

United Nations A/54/913–S/2000/560

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General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 31
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 12 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the communiqué issued today by the office of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity concerning the proximity talks held in Algiers from 30 May to 10 June 2000 with the delegations of Ethiopia and Eritrea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah **Baali**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-47571 (E) 130600 130600

Annex to the identical letters dated 12 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Communiqué issued by the office of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity concerning the proximity talks held in Algiers from 30 May to 10 June 2000 with the delegations of Ethiopia and Eritrea

On the occasion of his visit to Ethiopia and Eritrea last month, Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), issued a communiqué on 26 May 2000 in which he:

1. Welcomed the decision by Eritrea to respond positively to his appeal to withdraw its troops from Bada and Burrie, following its withdrawal from Zalambesa at the request of OAU.

2. Noted with satisfaction the commitment by the two parties to:

(a) Redeploy their respective forces to the positions held prior to 6 May 1998 in the case of Eritrea and prior to 6 February 1999 in the case of Ethiopia, in conformity with the Modalities and without prejudice to the final status of the territories concerned, which will be determined at the end of the delimitation-demarcation process;

(b) Settle their border dispute in conformity with the Framework Agreement and the Modalities, on the basis of the relevant colonial treaties and of applicable international law, through delimitation and demarcation with the assistance of the United Nations Cartographic Unit and, if necessary, through arbitration;

(c) Pursue negotiations under the auspices of OAU with a view to finalizing the consolidated technical arrangements and thus achieving the implementation of the peace plan constituted by the Framework Agreement, the Modalities and the consolidated technical arrangements;

3. Emphasized that the proximity talks scheduled to begin in Algiers on 26 May 2000, in which Ethiopia and Eritrea had agreed to take part, should put an effective end to the fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea and provide an opportunity to finalize the peace plan and proceed to its implementation, with a view to a peaceful, fair and lasting settlement of the conflict between the two neighbouring countries.

The proximity talks actually began in Algiers on 30 May 2000 with the participation of the delegations of Ethiopia and Eritrea, headed by their respective Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Seyoum Mesfin and Mr. Haile Weldensae. The talks, conducted by Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia, Special Envoy of the current Chairman of OAU, also enjoyed the active support of the European Union, represented by Mr. Rino Serri, Special Representative of the Presidency of the European Union on this issue, and the United States of America, represented by Mr. Anthony Lake, that country's Special Representative on this issue.

The statement issued by the Council of Ministers of Ethiopia on 31 May 2000 announcing that Ethiopia had regained control of the territories administered by it prior to 6 May 1998 and that the war was therefore over was welcomed with relief by OAU, which viewed it as encouraging progress towards a peaceful, lasting settlement of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The proximity talks were intended to resolve the various practical aspects of the implementation of the peace plan, beginning with the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from positions taken by them since 6 February 1999 and ending with the settlement of the border dispute on the basis of colonial treaties and applicable international law, through delimitation and demarcation and, if necessary, through arbitration.

However, at Ethiopia's request and with Eritrea's consent, it was agreed to first finalize a ceasefire agreement and then negotiate and finalize a second agreement on the other outstanding issues.

In negotiating the ceasefire agreement, it was placed on record that:

1. The two parties undertake to respect a number of basic principles, namely:

(a) That the present crisis and any other dispute between the two countries must be settled by peaceful, legal means, in conformity with the principles set forth in the Charters of OAU and the United Nations;

(b) That force cannot be used as a means of imposing a solution in the event of a dispute;

(c) That the borders inherited on independence must be respected, as stipulated in resolution AHG/Res.16 (I) adopted by the OAU Summit held in Cairo in 1964, and in this regard that those borders must be determined on the basis of the relevant colonial treaties and of applicable international law, using technical means to demarcate them and, in the event of a dispute, having recourse to an appropriate arbitration mechanism.

2. The two parties undertake to end their hostilities as soon as the ceasefire agreement is signed.

3. Eritrea agrees that the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from positions taken since 6 February 1999 should take place once the United Nations has deployed a peacekeeping force under OAU auspices.

4. Eritrea agrees to the adoption of security guarantees designed to reduce tensions and establish a climate of calm and confidence and also to create conditions conducive to a peaceful, lasting settlement of the conflict through the delimitation and demarcation of the border. These conditions concern the creation of a security zone in Eritrea designed to separate the forces of the two countries following the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops to the 6 May 1998 line.

5. The two parties agree that the peacekeeping mission should ensure that the various measures outlined above are put into effect and that they are observed until the border delimitation and demarcation process is complete.

Despite these many points on which Ethiopia and Eritrea were in agreement, on the evening of Thursday, 8 June 2000 there was still disagreement on two points,

one being the exact definition of the security zone between the forces of the two countries and the other being certain aspects of the composition and functioning of the international peacekeeping force.

Anxious not to let the two parties miss this precious opportunity to achieve peace, the office of the current Chairman undertook to submit to the delegations of Ethiopia and Eritrea on Friday, 9 June a draft ceasefire agreement embodying the points on which agreement had already been reached and compromises on the two points of disagreement mentioned above.

The Eritrean delegation informed the office of the current Chairman of OAU that the Government of Eritrea formally accepted the ceasefire agreement. This acceptance was confirmed in writing.

The Ethiopian delegation, for its part, notified the office of the current Chairman of its Government's acceptance in principle of the ceasefire agreement, but requested a short time to enable its national leadership to take a solemn decision on the agreement, which the two parties will then sign in Algiers.

On behalf of all Africa, Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika expressed profound satisfaction at this encouraging development, which gives the continent's peoples and leaders reason to hope that calm and peace will be restored between Ethiopia and Eritrea, two fraternal, neighbouring countries, thereby enabling them to finalize the settlement of their border dispute.

Pending the signing of the agreement drafted in Algiers and hence the entry into force of a formal ceasefire, the office of the current Chairman of OAU urges Ethiopia and Eritrea to show the utmost restraint in order to put an immediate end to the armed actions still taking place on the ground. It also urges the international community to encourage the two parties to pursue this wise course of action.

Lastly, the office of the current Chairman expresses its profound gratitude to the European Union and the United States of America for the active, full support which they have given to OAU during this mediation process.

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 43
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 12 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter, addressed to you by the President of the Republic of Lebanon, Émile Lahoud, which I kindly request to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Selim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-47633 (E) 130600 130600

Annex to the letter dated 12 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 9 June 2000 from the President of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to convey to you my particular gratitude for the efforts that you, personally, are making to assist Lebanon and in the endeavour for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and the verification of Israel's withdrawal to the international boundaries. I should also like to thank you for the pains taken by the United Nations team headed by your Special Envoy, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen.

As you are preparing to submit to the Security Council a report on the conclusions you have reached, I should like to draw your attention to the points set forth below, which are of exceptional importance to us as they relate to those conclusions and the consequences they may have.

I. Security Council resolution 425 (1978)

In this resolution the Security Council "calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries" and "calls upon Israel ... to ... withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory".

II. Report of the Secretary-General of 22 May 2000 (S/2000/460)

Paragraph 11 of this report states that "for the practical purpose of confirming the Israeli withdrawal, the United Nations needs to identify a line to be adopted conforming to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon ..." and that "the United Nations will then identify physically, on the ground, those portions of the line necessary or relevant to confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces".

Paragraph 13 of the report states that "the international boundary between Israel and Lebanon was established pursuant to the 1923 Agreement between France and Great Britain ...", that "this line was reaffirmed in the Israeli-Lebanese General Armistice Agreement signed on 23 March 1949" and that "subsequently there were several modifications mutually agreed by Israel and Lebanon".

III. The thrust of the resolution, the above report and the work of Mr. Roed-Larsen and his team

The resolution and the report, as well as the historical records and the various documents and maps, including those in the possession of the United Nations, confirm unequivocally that there are between Lebanon and Israel "internationally recognized boundaries" that have never been in dispute between the two countries. Indeed, the descriptive delimitation of these boundaries completed in 1923 was meticulously retraced in 1949, under the supervision of the United Nations and its observers, from boundary pillar 1 to boundary pillar 38 by way of all those in between.

Lebanon was therefore astonished, during the meetings held with the United Nations representatives, by statements intimating that its boundaries with Israel were not precisely confirmed, that Israel had not submitted any documents or maps, and that the United Nations had lost the 1949 armistice delimitation documents in a flood. Lebanon, for its part, submitted the 1923 and 1949 documents and all the approved maps of the boundaries in question, of whose accuracy and authenticity there can be no doubt, while no one has come forward with any evidence to refute the maps, documents, agreements and records indicated.

Lebanon was also surprised by the proposal to adopt a "withdrawal line" for the purpose of confirming Israel's withdrawal when resolution 425 (1978) and the report of the Secretary-General make no mention whatever of any such line but refer to "a line ... conforming to the international boundaries". Accordingly, the withdrawal can only be confirmed on the basis of the boundary line and not on the basis of a fanciful and non-existent "withdrawal line".

Lebanon was further surprised to be told that it was not the task of the United Nations to delimit the boundaries between Lebanon and Israel. It responded by stating clearly that it was not, of course, the task of the United Nations to delimit the boundaries between Lebanon and Israel just as, at the same time, it was not the task of the United Nations team to ignore existing, recognized boundaries and to replace them with an imaginary "withdrawal line" to be used as a basis for confirming Israel's withdrawal in breach of the letter and spirit of the resolution and the report. Besides, Israel had itself recognized, in article 1 of the Lebanon-Israel agreement of 17 May [1983] (subsequently denounced) that the two parties agreed to respect each other's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity and that they regarded the existing international boundaries between Lebanon and Israel as inviolable. (The text of the agreement was shown to Mr. Roed-Larsen at the time.)

There is an existing international boundary that is not in doubt and that is established in the records and by history, and it can obviously be used to confirm whether or not the withdrawal has taken place.

In connection with the Shab'a farmlands, it is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that a de facto line has been adopted for the area in light of the fact that there are no old maps that can confirm the boundary there between Lebanon and Syria. Accordingly, the de facto line is the line separating the areas of operation of UNIFIL and UNDOF, while the United Nations notes that this line can in no way be regarded as affecting the rights of the parties concerned with respect to their international boundaries.

Lebanon has accepted this assessment until such time as a joint formula for the farmlands area can be agreed by Lebanon and Syria for submission to the United Nations. Inasmuch as there is no such ambiguity with respect to the boundary between Lebanon and Syria north of the farmlands, Israel's withdrawal from the Lebanese highlands on Mount Hermon is a matter that pertains to the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which uses the expression "from all Lebanese territory".

The concept of a "de facto line" is used in the Secretary-General's report only with reference to the status of the Shab'a farmlands. Lebanon was astonished by the attempt to apply the same concept to the Lebanon-Israel boundaries, which is totally incompatible with the Secretary-General's report and Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Where there are "internationally recognized boundaries" there can be no

"de facto line". Indeed, the Secretary-General adopted such a line only where there was ambiguity in the case of the boundaries of the Shab'a farmlands.

IV. Cooperation with the United Nations in the drafting of a non-paper

The Lebanese side spent more than one week with Mr. Roed-Larsen and his team in drawing up a draft non-paper. The extensive discussions conducted for this purpose led to a preliminary understanding pending confirmation of Israel's withdrawal. Lebanon was therefore surprised by the press release of 6 June 2000 giving an account of the results of the work of the United Nations team, some aspects of which conflicted with the agreed text in the non-paper. The most important point is that it cast doubt on the existing international boundaries between Lebanon and Israel and again adopted the principle of the "withdrawal line" rather than the "boundary line" in breach of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and the report of the Secretary-General. It thus left a dangerous ambiguity with regard to the distance and the amount of territory separating the international boundary line and the imaginary "withdrawal line". This means that the withdrawal line will provide protection for continued Israeli violations of the international boundary line located beyond it. We wish, in this connection, to draw attention to the need to remedy this situation.

With Mr. Roed-Larsen and his team Lebanon also raised the issue of the Lebanese detainees and hostages held in Israeli prisons and the question of the repatriation of the remains of resistance fighters. Lebanon called for the immediate release of the prisoners and hostages on the grounds that the situation in which the arrests took place and the two remaining hostages, Sheikh Abd al-Karim Obeid and Hajj Mustafa al-Dirani, were abducted arose during the time of Israel's occupation and should therefore lapse when its withdrawal takes place.

Lebanon further raised the issue of the diversion of water from Lebanese territory and its belief that the dismantling of all Israeli equipment and installations used for this purpose is a step that must necessarily accompany the withdrawal. It also requested the United Nations to investigate the question of the depletion of the Hasbani river in the vicinity of the international boundary.

In conclusion, Lebanon, which always cooperates with the United Nations and earnestly seeks the implementation of the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and of your report, wishes to draw your attention to the observations set out above in the light of their importance and gravity. Lebanon also draws your attention to the difficulties it is encountering in its work with the UNIFIL team assigned to verify the withdrawal on the ground. The line in question, also, despite our previously stated objection to it, has been the scene of Israeli violations at numerous points and has been imprecisely determined because of the pressure brought to bear on the United Nations team to expedite its work to the detriment of accuracy. We fear that this too may further complicate matters.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to thank you once again for all the efforts you are making and to express appreciation for those also being made by your Special Envoy, his team and the United Nations troops operating in Lebanon. I hope that these efforts and endeavours will meet with all the success we can wish them.

(*Signed*) Émile **Lahoud**
General
President of the Republic

United Nations A/54/915

General Assembly

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14 June 2000

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Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 125
Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 14 June 2000 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

1. At present, 35 Member States are in arrears under the terms of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states as follows:

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member."

2. The minimum payments necessary to reduce the amounts owed by those Member States on their contributions so that they remain below the gross amount assessed for the preceding two full years (1998-1999) are the following:

	United States dollars
Burundi	246 800.00
Cape Verde	130 900.00
Central African Republic	260 700.00
Chad	34 700.00
Comoros[a]	766 500.00
Congo[b]	463 612.23
Djibouti	139 100.00
Dominica	87 778.00
Ecuador	185 959.04
Gambia	128 806.00
Georgia[c]	6 041 100.00
Grenada	82 658.00
Guinea	84 100.00

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	United States dollars
Guinea-Bissau[b]	412 800.00
Haiti	17 741.00
Iraq	11 134 000.00
Kyrgyzstan	606 780.11
Liberia	1 088 500.00
Madagascar	114 632.37
Mauritania	164 581.00
Niger	279 200.00
Republic of Moldova	2 458 393.00
Rwanda	60 806.99
Saint Lucia	20 965.00
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	114 981.00
Sao Tome and Principe	543 200.00
Seychelles	137 500.00
Sierra Leone	135 600.00
Somalia	944 600.00
Tajikistan[a]	2 181 759.00
Togo	103 600.00
Turkmenistan	339 473.00
Vanuatu	123 981.00
Yemen	10 111.00
Yugoslavia	14 109 200.00

[a] By its resolution 53/36 F of 28 July 1999, the General Assembly decided that the Comoros and Tajikistan would be permitted to vote in the Assembly until 30 June 2000.

[b] By its decision 53/406 C of 7 April 1999, the General Assembly decided that the Congo and Guinea-Bissau would be permitted to vote in the Assembly until 30 June 2000.

[c] By its decision 54/455 A of 23 December 1999, the General Assembly decided that Georgia would be permitted to vote until 30 June 2000.

(*Signed*) Kofi **Annan**
Secretary-General

United Nations A/54/916–S/2000/577

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda items 43, 44, 56, 73 and 79

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 13 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventy-fifth regular session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3 June 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 43, 44, 56, 73 and 79, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fawzi Bin Abdul Majeed **Shobokshi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-48290 (E) 200600 200600

Annex to the letter dated 13 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventy-fifth session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3 June 2000

On Saturday, 3 June 2000, the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its seventy-fifth regular session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council reviewed the results of the meetings held by a number of ministerial committees for the purpose of promoting joint action as well as the developments that had taken place with respect to political issues at the regional, inter-Arab and international levels.

Cooperation

In connection with economic matters, the Council was informed of the results of the fifth Meeting of Ministers for Municipal Affairs and the fifty-second meeting of the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and of the recommendations they had made for the advancement of cooperation in their respective fields.

In the context of the progress made by the GCC States in establishing close economic relations with international economic groupings, the Ministerial Council welcomed the signing in May 2000 of a Declaration of Principles on cooperation between the GCC States and the States members of the European Free Trade Area and expressed the hope that the declaration would mark the beginning of successful cooperation between the two parties.

In the field of matters affecting man and the environment, the Ministerial Council reviewed the results of the meetings held by a number of ministerial committees, namely those concerned with the expansion of cooperation in the areas

of higher education, scientific research, the civil service, health, Red Crescent societies and the protection of the marine environment in member States.

The Ministerial Council was also informed of the results of the meetings held by a number of committees concerned with the promotion of military cooperation between member States, and it expressed satisfaction at the results achieved by the relevant committees in this regard.

Political issues

The Ministerial Council discussed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to the consequences of its aggression against Kuwait. It noted once again that Iraq was still temporizing and was evading compliance with fundamental aspects of the relevant Security Council resolutions. It again expressed regret that the Iraqi regime was persisting in ignoring resolutions that have the force of international law, in defying the will of the international community and in rejecting inter-Arab and international initiatives for the creation of an acceptable and effective mechanism or schedule, within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations, for the lifting of the international economic embargo being maintained against Iraq and ending the suffering of the Iraqi people. The Council called upon the Iraqi Government to demonstrate its good faith, in both word and deed, to refrain from any act of provocation or aggression against Kuwait and its other neighbours in compliance with Security Council resolution 949 (1994), to desist from carrying out any acts of sabotage through the agency of elements seeking to undermine the security and stability of Kuwait, and to acknowledge that its invasion of Kuwait had been in violation of the relevant pan-Arab and international covenants. The Council once again urged the Government of Iraq to comply expeditiously with Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) and to cooperate with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission established thereby and with the other international arrangements for the release of Kuwaiti and Saudi prisoners and hostages and the return of Kuwaiti property.

The Council further welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1293 (2000), by which the allocation for the repair of Iraqi oil installations is increased from $600 million to $1.2 billion.

In the same context, the Ministerial Council again welcomed all resolutions and initiatives that might contribute to mitigating the suffering of the Iraqi people, suffering for whose origin and perpetuation the Iraqi regime must bear full responsibility. The Council expressed the hope that Iraq would without delay take practical and genuine steps to give clear expression to its commitment to the relevant resolutions and to the requirements for security and stability in the region so as to demonstrate its seriousness by responding to the efforts made at the Arab and international levels to mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people and restore Iraq to its place in the international community.

The Council reaffirmed its well-known and well-established positions with respect to the need to maintain the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The Council heard a presentation from His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, concerning ideas for

mitigating the human suffering of the Iraqi people. These ideas will be incorporated in a paper to be sent to member States in order to elicit comments and proposals in their regard.

The Ministerial Council reviewed relations with Iran and the efforts being made by the Committee of Three. It recalled the basic principles approved by the Supreme Council and the approach adopted by the GCC States in their relations with Iran, based as they are on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the affairs of others, rejection of the threat or use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and regard for mutual interests. It also recalled the instructions given by the Supreme Council at its second consultative meeting, held in Muscat on 29 April 2000, that the Ministerial Committee of Three should continue its efforts to devise a mechanism for direct negotiations between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the dispute concerning the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. The Ministerial Council expressed the hope that the Iranian Government would respond to the worthy purpose for which the Committee had been established.

The Council considered developments in the peace process in the Middle East, and it noted with regret the breakdown in negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli tracks, which had again brought the peace process to a situation of deadlock.

In this context, the Council again expressed its conviction that the only explanation for the breakdown in the peace process on all tracks was the maintenance by Israel of unjustifiable positions and its failure to meet the requirements of the process while the Arab side was pursuing its commitment to peace as an irreversible strategic option. The Ministerial Council renewed its demand that influential parties, and in particular the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as well as the European Union and its member States, should take action and make greater efforts to urge the Israelis to return to the principles endorsed by the Madrid Peace Conference so that legitimate Arab rights could be restored in implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and the principle of land for peace.

The Ministerial Council reaffirmed its well-established position that a comprehensive and just peace can only be achieved with the attainment by the Palestinian people of all its legitimate rights, including the right of the Palestine refugees to return in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the right to establish an independent State on its national soil with Jerusalem as its capital. The Council reaffirmed its full support for the position adopted by the State of Palestine that rejects any attempts on the part of the Israeli Government to alter the demographic composition or geographical character of the occupied territories and regards such actions as being in violation of the provisions of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. It also stressed that a comprehensive peace can only be achieved with a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Arab Golan to the boundary line as it existed on 4 June 1967.

The Ministerial Council conveyed its sincere congratulations to the President, Government and people of Lebanon on the restoration of the country's sovereignty over its liberated territories and on the evacuation of the Israeli occupation forces from southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa. It called upon Israel to complete its

withdrawal from all Lebanese territory in accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). The Council stressed that it was essential that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should perform the security functions assigned to it in southern Lebanon under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) in order to prevent Israel from finding pretexts to hold Lebanon and Syria responsible for any security incidents that might occur and might jeopardize security, peace and stability in the region.

The Ministerial Council looks forward to the forthcoming meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Damascus Declaration countries, to be held on 5 June 2000 in Egypt, as an important contribution to joint Arab action.

The Ministerial Council gave its full endorsement to the statement adopted at the meeting held in Tadmur (Palmyra), Syrian Arab Republic, on 3 and 4 May 2000 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic in support of the performance by UNIFIL of the security functions assigned to it under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

The Council once more called upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council again affirmed that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

The Ministerial Council followed with great concern the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and it urged them to do all in their power to spare the two countries the calamity of further warfare and killing. The Council hopes that Ethiopia's announcement of a halt to military operations will be helpful in reaching agreement to end the conflict.